



Connecticut Coalition for Environmental Justice

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Against Proposed Bill 800 An Act Restoring Commuter Rail Service from Waterbury to Hartford

Testimony by:

Dr. Mark Mitchell
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Please tell me that the Transportation Committee is not seriously contemplating throwing away 10 years of planning, engineering, public outreach, and public involvement that has brought us to this day where the New Britain Hartford Busway is finally, at long last, close to implementation.

The Connecticut Coalition for Environmental Justice has been involved with this project from the very first days of its inception. We support this project because it will make transit more attractive, causing some individuals to leave their cars at home and ride the bus. This will clean the air and reduce fuel usage as well as promote exercise and reduce obesity. The impact on air quality will be most marked in inner city neighborhoods in New Britain and Hartford, where the environmental concerns of the least powerful citizens have gone unheard for many years. Not only will auto trips be eliminated, but also, all vehicles on the busway will be clean fuel, with very little in the way of emissions.

The improved transit system will also provide improved service for those who already ride the bus. Sometimes it seems their needs are forgotten by our government. Just as an example: Is it all right for a Hartford resident to spend an hour getting to classes at nearby Central CT State University? The busway will reduce the travel time from downtown to CCSU to 12 minutes. Imagine the number of young people who will now find CCSU a viable option for their further education.

Please reject proposed Bill 800 and keep the busway project moving ahead.